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IN THE GOLDEN

By Fitzgerald

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Synopsis of Preceding Chapters

Olive Dumbarton, after the legal separation from her brutal husband, becomes a successful author and lives quietly with her daughter, Veronica, at Heston Road, St. John's Wood, London. Her husband secretly returns to London and by letter makes further demands for money. Her cousin, Valerie Galbraith, a man of independent wealth who has been in love with her since early youth, calls to say farewell before starting on a trip to Egypt. A few nights later Olive Dumbarton is found in her library holding a dagger over the dead body of her husband. She is arrested and held for trial, and detectives are put on the case. George Bostock, the publisher, and Valerie Galbraith take an active interest in the investigation, and the former is shadowed by Inspector Mackworth. Angela Mezza, an Italian woman, sworn to Mrs. Dumbarton and Inspector Mackworth that the murder was committed by her husband. The Inspector discovers Pietro, a model and former companion of Mezza.

CHAPTER XVII

George Bostock drove home to his flat in Herschel Mansions absorbed and impressed by the interview which had taken place between him and the author. Entering his sitting-room, he found half a dozen letters awaiting him, which he read without understanding and laid aside, only to take up once more and read again with the like result; for his mind, being full of the woman he had just quitted, was incapable of fresh impressions.

Almost immediately the servant entered to say Mr. Mackworth had called to see her master.

"Show him in, and say I shall be with him directly," the publisher said, thinking the inspector called to tell him what he already knew.

Now, Mackworth, on learning at the Italian hospital of the death of Mezza, and having the news confirmed by an inspection of the certificate of Marco's death at the Consulate, was thoroughly disappointed to find the deceased foreigner was not the man who had taken David Dumbarton's life.

But his mind, recovering from this mortification, reverted with force to his old theory that George Bostock, and no other, was the criminal. He was the individual whose interests were centered in Dumbarton's death, and though Quinton Quave had hesitated to recognize in him the figure which was seen to watch the house on the night of the murder, Martyn, the policeman, had identified him as the man who was in the immediate vicinity of the scene of the tragedy soon after it had taken place.

These considerations, coupled with the fact that Mackworth had been unable to trace George Bostock's movements from his leaving Mrs. Dumbarton's presence until his return to Herschel Mansions early in the morning, and with the further discovery that it was his habit, and probably had been for some time before the tragedy, to spend a portion of every night watching the authoress' house, led the inspector to believe his suspicions of Bostock were just.

"I have ventured to disturb you, sir," he began, "that I might tell you of a discovery—a disappointing discovery—I have made in the case which interests us both."

"You have not disturbed me," answered George Bostock. "But I think I have already heard your news. Sit down."

"After all," said the inspector, his eyes watching the publisher's face, "the Italian was not the man who killed Mr. Dumbarton."

"I know, I know," responded Bostock, irritably.

"You know," exclaimed Mackworth, with emphasis on the last word.

"As I told you, I have already heard the news."

"From Mrs. Dumbarton?"

"Yes," Bostock replied, seating himself with an air of weariness.

"When I brought her the news this morning she was in a desperate state, for she sees how black her case is, and has little hope left," remarked the inspector, shaking his head with a melancholy air.

"But surely, surely you have some clew?" exclaimed Bostock, rousing himself.

"I may say, sir, between us, that I have none," replied Mackworth, with impressiveness.

"None," repeated Bostock, his face ghastly. "There must be some clew."

"Why?" the inspector asked, eagerly.

"Because here was a man stabbed in the open roadway, outside the house in which he took refuge; stabbed by somebody he had quarreled with, wronged or insulted, and—"

"And," said Mackworth, as the publisher suddenly paused.

"And there must be some clew forthcoming."

"Are you sure Dumbarton's death happened as you describe it, sir?"

"Certain? No. How can I be certain?" Bostock said, controlling his excitement. "But in what other way can you account for the murder?"

Mackworth hesitated a second before deciding on the course he would pursue, then, leaning forward, he said, lowering his voice to an impressive key: "What I say must remain quite a secret."

"A secret," replied Bostock, his face full of anxiety. "You may trust me."

"Well, I shouldn't be surprised if the lady who is accused of the crime was in reality guilty."

"No, no," exclaimed the publisher, in hot indignation. "I know she is not."

"You do?" said Mackworth, quickly, with a searching glance at the face before him.

"I will stake my life that she is innocent."

"Your life?"

"Yes," answered Bostock, a sudden change from excitement to calmness coming over him, "my life."

"But you have not heard my explanation."

"Nor do I want to hear it."

"It may be reasonable for all that," persisted the inspector. "Doctors tell us there are persons of highly wrought, nervous temperaments, who, under the influence of drugs or mesmerism, are guilty of acts that they would be incap-

planed.

"Do you think?"

"Judge."

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CHAP. XVIII.

George Bostock, meanness, g and fear were inflamed by his conversation with Mackworth. If what the inspector said was true, then prob-

Olive Dumbarton could incur the